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II.

GERMANY.

In the January number of *The Monist* I mentioned a treatise written by G. Ludwigs, in which the novels of Wilhelm Walloth were criticised, and expressed my surprise that in the work discussed a personality unquestionably diseased was stamped as a poet of almost the first order. Much that then struck me as strange and was unclear to me, was later rendered plain and intelligible; and the explanation was not long in forthcoming.

As the newspapers shortly afterwards announced, Ludwigs was simply the pseudonym of a sixteen year old gymnasium student of Darmstadt, who had already attracted the attention of wider circles by the poems he had written. It happens at times that individualities of this description bear out in the advanced years of their life the promise of their youth. Extraordinary things were to be expected, though I cannot say *hoped*, of Ludwigs; but the expectation was not fulfilled. He, an instance of real decadence, yet a boy in years, voluntarily took his own life, deeply mourned by his literary associates, the "Young Germans," in whose magazine *Die Gesellschaft* a brother of the deceased is now publishing biographical notes and literary remains—novels and poems—all more of a psychological than literary interest. The biographical notes plainly mark out a personality smitten with psychosis and suffering in a marked degree with hyperæsthesia, and the literary remains reflect this mental condition; light-sensations especially playing an important rôle. His nervous system was too weak to assert itself permanently against the outer world. This pressure, which objectively considered was not at all a powerful one, did not admit of the rise of a powerful sense of life; and especially oppressive to the precocious youth was the life of the school in the most varied ways, and in an unexpected moment the flame of his life went out.

As psychologists, we should find considerable interest in the study of this phenomenon of Ludwigs. We must admire his abilities and his capacity for work, which not only enabled him to per-

form his duties as a student of the gymnasium, but also left him time enough, in addition to his literary work, to employ himself with the psychological writings of Wundt and Münsterberg, which he desired to turn to account in the field of poetry. We must mourn too his sad fate. But we have no reason to *glorify* such a diseased personality, as is done on many sides in the April number of *Die Gesellschaft*.

But this is a peculiar characteristic of the Young-German writers and their confrères abroad, that they make the diseased take the place of the sound, and the ugly of the beautiful, and thus help greatly to undermine the health of the common mind. There are it is true a goodly number of trusting souls who believe that we may regard with security and composure, the endeavors and tendencies of the naturalistic apostles, as our taste in literature and art—a few cases excepted—can surely not be reversed into its opposite. On this point, perhaps, those who so think are not wrong. But the stage may easily be reached where literary taste no longer remains determinative, and the place of the æsthetical interest in things is taken by the scientific, before whose judgment-seat no difference of the beautiful and the hideous exists.

This view is the direct outcome of philosophical materialism. The latter doctrine may at present, it is true, be regarded in all its main points as definitively overthrown, so far as philosophy is concerned ; but in the domain of *belles lettres*—a term not quite allowable here—the wave which it has created still sweeps mightily onward. Two new works seek to break its force, which have been published in the series *Gegen den Materialismus* edited by Dr. Schmidkunz (Stuttgart : Krabbe). The first treatise bears the title *Materialismus und Ästhetik* and has no less a person as author than MORIZ CARRIÈRE ; the second treats of *Materialism in Literature* and is the production of the northerner OLA HANSSON. I am unable to say that these two treatises have especially satisfied me. Both authors look at the subject too one-sidedly from the point of view of æsthetics, and have not by far given a sufficient recognition to the psychological aspect of the subject. I recognise indeed with Carrière, in spite of all the apparent mutability of taste, a normative æsthetics ; but

that man bears within him an ideal of life, as the seed does the plant with its blossom and its fruit, I am unable for psychological reasons to concede. I grant that I find with Ola Hansson psychology in so far poorly represented in the naturalistic literature as the growth and evolution of character is made to appear a much too simple process; and I concede furthermore that the evolution of character in the individual case is very far removed from anything like resemblance to an example in mathematics, inasmuch as quantities may be lacking us in such a case which are absolutely necessary to be taken account of for a correct solution of the problem; but these missing quantities need not for that reason be at all matters of mystery, in their true nature wholly unknown to us.

To what limits the domain of mystery has shrunk and to how great an extent its expressions may be made intelligible and to a certain degree even may be "regulated," provided, equipped with thorough knowledge, we courageously look the things in the face, is exemplified in a marked degree by a voluminous work of the above mentioned Dr. Schmidkunz. The so-called Suggestion passed for a long time as something wonderful and had to rest its defence in the hands of the representatives of a psycho-physical mysticism as opposed to a "surface"-psychology which in the words of Du Prels occupied itself exclusively with surface work without penetrating to the depths. SCHMIDKUNZ now points out in his *Psychologie der Suggestion* (Stuttgart, 1892: Ferdinand Enke) in a very comprehensive manner what others had very plainly hinted at before him, namely, that in the case of a very great number of phenomena we have, exactly viewed, to deal only with some very simple and quite explainable things which unite in the composition of what is commonly called suggestion. The contents of the work, however, are not exhausted with this; under the influence of a tremendous scope of reading, the author treats the whole domain of suggestion, and if he understood more perfectly the art of good writing, he would have earned a much greater gratitude than that which in any event is his due.

Schmidkunz touches repeatedly in his work upon a domain which still belongs to the most obscure of the history of civilisation, namely

witchcraft and the trials of witches. This topic, likewise viewed from a psychological point of view, forms the subject of a special treatise by SNELL, entitled *Hexenprocesse und Geistesstörung* (Munich, 1891: J. F. Lehmann). In this book no rôle is ascribed to suggestion, but as the title indicates the treatment centres about the question of what significance mental disorders generally may have possessed in the trials of witches. The author concedes that demented persons became the victims of the trials for witchcraft either because they had rendered themselves by their character open to the suspicion of a compact with the devil, or because they had by self-obtrusion directly drawn upon themselves this persecution, but asserts nevertheless, that the number of demented persons that fell victims to the trials for witchcraft, was comparatively very small. Mental disorder however played in so far a great rôle in the trials for witchcraft as demented persons, especially such as suffered from hysteria, became false witnesses and brought sound and healthy people into the hands of the persecuting judges.

As I am now treading the province of psychiatry, I will mention, that WILHELM GRIESINGER's celebrated work *Pathologie und Therapie der psychischen Krankheiten* has just been published in its fifth edition under the direction of Dr. Levinstein-Schlegel, the director of the Maison de Santé in Schöneberg (Berlin: August Hirschwald). I do not of course specify this work solely for the sake of the physicians who may be readers of *The Monist*, but am rather impelled to the act by a universal psychological consideration, for Griesinger in the first edition of the work also made a name for himself as a psychologist. It appeared originally in 1845, and possessed a compass of 396 pages; the fifth edition numbers 1100 pages and has increased considerably in size as compared with the fourth. Whether the augmentations have added anything to the value of the work is a question which must first be submitted for answer to our physicians. In psychological respects its value has in so far been very much increased as the experiential data have assumed much greater proportions: the psychological analysis however has been somewhat neglected.

Psychological analysis in fact is not the strong side of the ma-

jority of our psychiatrists. What Griesinger and still more so Spielmann sought after in this direction, has been greatly forced in the background. As a general rule our inquirers content themselves with a description of symptoms and the construction of a more than copious nomenclature, in the midst of which the connections are very easy to be overlooked. Among the commendable exceptions is to be named in this respect the well-known Vienna professor THEODOR MEYNERT. In addition to his extensive psychiatric works he has also published a considerable number of lectures and discourses partly in magazines and partly in separate brochures. These discourses are now presented in collected form in a book entitled *Sammlung von populärwissenschaftlichen Vorträgen über den Bau und die Leistungen des Gehirns* (Vienna, 1892, Wilhelm Braumüller). The most noticeable discourses are the following : The Significance of the Brain for the World of our Ideas ; The Mechanics of the Cerebral Structure ; On the Feelings ; On Illusion ; On the Significance of the Development of the Forehead ; The Mechanics of Physiognomy ; Brain and Culture ; The Co-operation of the Parts of the Brain ; On Artificial Disturbances of the Psychic Equilibrium. No words need be wasted in the recommendation of the book of Meynert.

CHR. UFER.